

REMARKS

This is in response to the Advisory Action mailed on January 18, 2008.

In response, the above amendment cancels claim 31. Thus, the amendment should be entered as it clearly does not raise any new issues. The only changes effected by the amendments to claims 26 and 29 are directed to minor informalities. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to indicate that the above amendments will be entered for purposes of appeal.

Next, the Examiner's position regarding claims 29 and 30 is respectfully traversed. The Examiner takes the position that these claims define features that are exclusive to the embodiments shown in Figs. 2 and 4. However, contrary to the Examiner's opinion, both of the embodiments shown in Figs. 2 and 4 have:

- i) a valve device (indicated by reference numeral 18 in both embodiments);
- ii) a metal supply system that is sealed from the environment (*in Fig. 2 the distribution chamber 5 is sealed from the environment by lid/cover 7; while in Fig. 4 the duct 31 of the metal supply system comprises closed gully 32*); and
- iii) an intermediate reservoir (17) with an open top (*in Fig. 2 reference numeral 22 indicates an "open" top, this feature is shown in Fig. 1, and described on page 6, lines 4-7; in Fig. 4 the "open" top intermediate reservoir is clearly illustrated, and is described on page 8, lines 10-11 of the original specification*).

Thus, a claim that recites the above features, reads on both of the disclosed embodiments, and therefore the claims do not impermissibly cross the disclosed species. Thus, the Examiner is

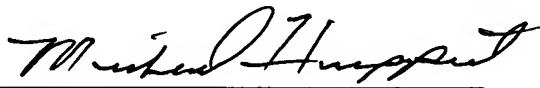
respectfully requested to explain how the prior art references meet the limitations of claims 29 and 30 so that Applicant can address these specific issues on appeal.

In view of the above, the Examiner is requested to enter the above amendments, and indicate that the rejection of claims 29 and 30 is withdrawn.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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